

Solon Offers Advice on Cutting Campaign Costs

By CHARLES E. CHAPEL
 Assemblyman, 46th District
 Monday, Feb. 7, marked the beginning of another hectic session here in the State Capitol in Sacramento. In addition to the heated discussions about the chaotic results of the reapportionment of the Legislature caused by the Supreme Court of the United States, the high cost of political campaigning is probably the most troublesome problem facing not only incumbents but also those running for public office for the first time. Strangely enough, few public officials tell their own constituents the facts. In 1962, a study was made

of the cost of conducting a campaign on the part of candidates for the Assembly in California. Those conducting the survey did not publish their findings in a form available to the public. Instead, they held a closed-door seminar in the private dining rooms of a Los Angeles hotel and in a series of talks given by various men for three days, reported their findings and conclusions. I was not present but I was fortunate enough to obtain the notes used by the speakers. One of the interesting conclusions was that it costs about \$15,000 to conduct a campaign for the Assembly

up to the June Primary Election, in Los Angeles County. Another conclusion was that it costs about \$30,000 to conduct a campaign for the Assembly from after the June Primary Election to the November General Election. This makes a total of \$45,000 as the cost of a campaign for the Assembly, win, draw or lose. Remember, that was a 1962 conclusion. * * * The people who spoke at the seminar based the above costs on an imaginary Assembly District in Los Angeles County having exactly one hundred thousand registered voters in 1962. The

findings and conclusions were based not upon the sworn statements filed by the Assembly candidates with the Registrar of Voters of Los Angeles County and with the Secretary of State in Sacramento, but upon the results of confidential investigations. Nearly four years have gone by. I have given a great deal of thought to what those people said in those smoke-filled hotel dining rooms. They probably were correct, but none of them contacted me in any way or I could have told them how to reduce expenses in an Assembly race. I ought to know. I was first

a candidate for the Assembly in 1950, and have been re-elected continuously in spite of the fact that the registration in the 46th Assembly District was overwhelmingly Democratic for many years and almost everyone knows that I am a Republican. Here are some of the ways that I reduce the cost of campaigning: First, I manage my own campaigns. Most candidates hire a public relations or advertising agency to run their campaigns. Second, I pay all the bills myself, by check, except for petty cash expenditures. I deal directly with printers,

the advertising departments of newspapers, and other advertising media. This saves money by avoiding any middleman. Third, I prepare my own speeches. Most candidates at all levels of government, hire speech writers, have the speech typed, and then read it. This is one of the reasons that so many candidates are so badly defeated. Most political speeches should not be either written or read. I merely stand on my feet and talk without notes. This should be easy for anyone who wants to tell the voters the truth. I quit talking at

the end of 25 minutes and sit down. When I quit at the end of 20 minutes, I get more votes. Fourth, I write my own political "literature." This, too, saves money. Of course, I have had some experience in writing. According to the United States Internal Revenue Service, the majority of my net income for many years has been the result of being to use U.S.I.R.S. language) a self-employed professional author of non-fiction." Fifth, I quit using political matches about 10 years ago, thus saving hundreds of dollars.

Sixth, I have not used billboards for several years and when I did I used them sparingly. The rental of billboards and the cost of posters pasted on them is a very expensive form of advertising anything except beer, cigarettes, whiskey, Reno, Las Vegas, and the Greyhound tours to those financial centers. In a subsequent issue of these newspapers, for which I receive no pay, I shall report my own campaign receipts and expenditures, truthfully, that is, I am looking forward to seeing others do the same, I am glad to report.

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